Returning to the Mountain of *Arete*: Reading Ecphrasis, Constructing Ethics in Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica**

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In this paper I present a re-examination of the central and most discussed scene of the Shield of Achilles, namely, the Mountain of *Arete* (Q.S. 5.49-56). I write 're-examination' because the Shield of Achilles itself has received more attention from scholars than any other part of the *Posthomerica*.¹ This scholarship, particularly that on the Mountain of *Arete*, has typically been *Quellenforschung*, with little analysis of function.² There is much justification, therefore, for a return to the Mountain of *Arete*. The scene deserves our attention primarily because it has a vital influence on how we read the whole poem. The sources that have been searched for so eagerly by scholars have a profound effect on this reading, and frequently activate meaning, via the reader.³ There are, principally, three aspects

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1 James / Lee (2000) 33-68 provide detailed (mainly, but certainly not exclusively, philological) commentary on the description of the Homeric armour, and summarise other scholarship on the scene where relevant. For the scene where the Mountain of *Arete* is described (5.45-56), see, in addition to James / Lee (2000) 52-54, Vian (1966) 203-205 (for extensive suggestions for inter-texts), and Byre (1982) 184-195. Köchly (1850) 265-267 sets the agenda for all later scholars to follow.

2 I acknowledge that commentators have already highlighted some of the correspondences found throughout the poem for this scene, particularly the corresponding *gnomai*. See Vian (1966) 203 (where he lists some, but by no means all, of the relevant *gnomai* – I would add 1.72-73, 3.8-9, 5.595-597, 7.52-55, 7.67-92, 9.507-508, 12.292-296, 12.388, 13.248-250, 13.476-479, 14.207-208), and James / Lee (2000) 52. Most of the commentators have noted the allegorical character and moral tone of the description. Contrast, however, Bassett (1925b) 414, who reads a non-moral meaning.

3 Little of the work has made an attempt at exegesis of the manifold 'cf.s' discovered, at the level of the reader. It is intertextual exegesis that I aim at. By reader I naturally mean the "Model Reader" (Conte [1986] 30) whose competence is established fully by the author. We as modern

that I raise for discussion in this paper: first, I do some *Quellenforschung* of my own, and conclude that the Mountain of *Arete* can be read as ‘Stoic’ in its inheritance, and that our reading of the (essentially) gnomic correspondences of the image is inextricably affected. I then establish that the Mountain of *Arete* behaves as a type of *mise-en-abîme* for a recurring thematic thread in the rest of the text. Much of my discussion in this paper focuses on the role of the reader for construction of meaning. I build on this aspect by concluding the paper with discussion of the intertextual nexus that exists in reading the Shield of Achilles, and particularly how such a Stoically-influenced image is accommodated within the overwhelmingly Homeric inheritance of the Shield. There is a clash between Stoic values, as explicated through correspondence in the text with the Mountain of *Arete* as *mise-en-abîme*, and indebtedness to the Homeric poems for mythology, language, and characterisation. This clash is the interwoven intertextual dynamic for discussion underlying this paper.⁴

Intertextuality and the Mountain of *Arete*

Before discussing the function of the scene on the Shield where the Mountain of *Arete* is described, I must discuss its nature and literary inheritance.

αἰπύτατον δ' ἐτέτυκτο θεοκμήτῳ ἐπὶ ἔργῳ	
καὶ τρηχὺ ζαθέης Ἀρετῆς ὄρος· ἐν δὲ καὶ αὐτῇ	50
εἰσθήκει φοίνικος ἐπεμβεβαυῖα κατ' ἄκρης	
ὑψηλὴ ψάφουσα πρὸς οὐρανόν. ἀμφὶ δὲ πάντῃ	
ἄτραπιτοὶ θαμέεσσι διειργόμενοι σκολόπεσσιν	
ἀνθρώπων ἀπέρυκτον ἐν πάτον, οὐνεκα πολλοὶ	
εἰσπίσω χάζοντο τεθηπότες αἰπὰ κέλευθα,	55
παῦροι δ' ἱερὸν οἶμον ἀνήιον ἰδρώοντες. (Q.S. 5.49-56)	

readers cannot completely activate the full range of meanings possible for an ancient reader; on the other hand, many readings are possible for us as modern readers that were most likely not activated by ancient readers, based on our historical backgrounds and knowledge of modern secondary literature. We should take account of ancient readings of literature, and Late Antique culture of the Second Sophistic, but we must not be bound by these criteria. Cf. Heath (2002) 120 on the usefulness of ancient literary criticism, and his (unsuccessful) attempts to extricate himself from the charge of privileging ancient readings over modern readings of texts. For the idea of the educated reader in the Second Sophistic, and the target readership of highly allusive texts, see Swain (1996) 63-64. For the inclusion of this last point, I am indebted to M. Baumbach.

4 On the indebtedness of the *Posthomerica* to the Homeric poems, see, above all, the cogent discussion in James / Lee (2000) 21-30, and more succinctly, Keydell (1963) 1294-1295. The very fact, naturally, that the poet decides to present a description of the Shield of Achilles is Homeric-emulative.

Highest of all on that work of divine craftsmanship was also depicted
 the rugged mountain of sacred *Arete*; and here *Arete* herself 50
 was standing mounted on top of a palm,
 aloft, almost reaching the heavens above. And in all directions round about
 pathways made difficult by dense thorn-bushes
 kept men back from the noble path. Therefore many
 shrank back in awe of the sheer paths, 55
 and few ascended in sweat, persevering up the sacred way.⁵

This figure occurs within the scenes of peace on the Shield.⁶ It is the most obvious departure from *Il.* 18.478-608, the model for this Shield, and one that immediately strikes the reader as allegorical in nature: that is, a description of a mountain of *abstract quality* is clearly not an actual, geographic mountain. There are features of this scene that have dominated study of it: the palm in particular (51), and its possible source and significance, has elicited most comment. It is not my intention to deal at length with the ‘palm issue’ here; a plausible source for it could be the palm of victory.⁷ Another source of contention has been the value of the term *Arete*. Some have suggested that it has a purely non-moral meaning like, as they state, the *Arete* in Cebes’ *Tabula*.⁸ It is difficult to assign one single meaning to the value, however. Even in the Homeric poems, *arete* can have varying significance. One of the key meanings in the context of the *Iliad* is ‘prowess’ in relation to battle,⁹ and it seems, on the basis of the examples found in the *Posthomeric*, that this is the chief meaning followed.¹⁰ In Greek literature gener-

5 Translation of this scene presents some problems: it is difficult to decide on the true definition of ἄκρης (51) in its context – is it an adjective of quality or should it be taken closely with κατά (see James / Lee [2000] 55)? The exact sense of the varying vocabulary for ‘path’ is difficult to bring out (53-56). I have not translated φοῖνιξ as “palm-tree” for reasons that will become apparent; also, I have not translated *Arete* as “virtue” due to the particular connotations of that English word which now fails to cover all of the aspects of the corresponding Greek word.

6 On the division of the Shield into scenes, see Byre (1982) 184-185. See also Baumbach (this collection), who decisively demonstrates that the scene where the Mountain of *Arete* is described is in the central position of the Shield.

7 Vian (1966) 204 compares Silius Italicus, *Punica* 15.100-107, where *Virtus* herself speaks to Scipio. The speech contains striking verbal parallels with the Posthomeric scene (e.g. Q.S. 5.53, 55 echo Sil. 15.101; 5.55-56 echo 15.103-104; and 5.45-46 echo 15.106-107); the most important parallel is that between Sil. 15.100 – *me cinctus lauro producit ad astra Triumphus* “Triumph, crowned with laurel, leads me to the stars” – and Q.S. 5.51-52. Byre (1982) 189, however, is correct to state that “it is vain to seek for a single direct source”.

8 Bassett (1925b) 415-418, who makes a case for direct influence. Bassett fails to take account properly of the nature of the *Tabula*, that it is an extended and moralistic ecphrasis expounded in a dialogue. Cf. Fitzgerald / White (1983) 14-15 on the nature of the *Tabula*; James / Lee (2000) 53, and Byre (1982) 189, on the intertextual relationship.

9 So Sharples (1991) 4, following Adkins (1960) 31-37.

10 See LSJ s.v. ἀρετή I, and cf. Bassett (1925b) 414-416; the word occurs at Q.S. 1.732 (Thersites to Achilles, a statement that should be taken closely with the gnomic statement at 1.738, which

ally, however, *arete* is best translated as “excellence”, that is, a quality in someone or something that brings the best results, or success.¹¹ A moral signification for the term is possible, and as Sharples states, is for example very much part of the teaching of Socrates.¹² This meaning does not monopolise the term, however. In sum, we cannot restrict the sense of the *Arete* of the Mountain of *Arete* to a non-moral meaning, due to the moralising correspondences with the image, some of which dwell on conduct in life; nor can we exclude the non-moral meaning of excellence, that is, how to conduct oneself in battle.

Focusing on the description of *Arete* on the Shield, there are features that draw attention to its divinity. Most significantly, perhaps, is the fact that *Arete* is described as very sacred (50). Both in the *Posthomeric* and in the *Iliad*, ζαθέος is used only of the divine.¹³ Within the immediate context in the scene, emphasis is laid on the divinely-made nature of the work (49 – θεοκμήτω), and on the fact that *Arete* stretches up to heaven (52). Those who reach the top of the Mountain of *Arete*, after considerable toil (56), can expect some reward connected with οὐρανός.¹⁴ The path to the top is described as both noble and holy (54 – ἔόν, and 56 – ἱερόν),¹⁵ and the Mountain itself is made highest on the Shield (49 – αἰπύ-τατον). Why such emphasis on the divine nature of the destination?

The answer can be found in the intertextual inheritance of this scene – an inheritance that has a profound effect on the reader’s understanding of the scene’s

clearly identifies *Arete* with the *Kudos* of war), 3.124 (of Achilles’ war prowess), 5.592 (Odysseus in lamentation for Ajax, on the contest of *Arete* for a Shield with an emblem of that *Arete* on it), 7.651 (Phoenix to Neoptolemus, praising the *Arete* of Achilles), and 7.668 (Neoptolemus in reply on a similar theme). The instances in the *Iliad* are: 8.535, 9.494, 11.90, 11.762, 13.237, 13.277, 14.118, 20.242, 20.411, 22.268, 23.276, 23.374, 23.571, 23.578.

11 Sharples (³1991) 4: “*arete* is always closer to the notion of that which brings success than is English ‘virtue’.”

12 Sharples (³1991) 4.

13 Within the *Posthomeric*, it is used, personally, only of (the deified – 14.186-187) Achilles, at 14.304; this is not insignificant, given that it is the divine Achilles that appears to his son to expound just what this *Arete* is. Everywhere else in the poem, it is used only of places associated with gods, or used of gods themselves: 2.444, 3.88, 3.545, 4.575, 5.50, 6.146, 8.295, 10.127, 11.42, 12.482, 13.276, 13.435, 14.87, 14.304, and 14.413. In the *Iliad*, it is used only of places: 1.38, 1.452, 2.508, 2.520, 9.151, and 9.293. See, further, James / Lee (2000) 54.

14 Cf. 14.197, where it is also suggested that *Arete* reaches up to heaven; cf. Byre (1982) 194. James / Lee (2000) 53 are correct to identify the fruits of the tree at 14.198-199 as the reward for those who have led a life according to *Arete*. Byre (1982) 195 states that “the whole passage [...] is a symbolic expression of the doctrine, associated especially with the Neo-Pythagoreans, according to which a life of *arete* attained through *ponos* is rewarded in the afterlife by celestial ease and repose”. He, however, fails to provide suitable evidence of this doctrine within the Neo-Pythagorean system; such a description is more suited to the *Tabula* of Cebes – see Fitzgerald / White (1983) 24.

15 James / Lee (2000) 55 are correct to point out the specific uses of ἱερά ὁδός (described in LSJ s.v. ἱερός 9, of the road that leads to Delphi) that the use of ἱερός here echoes. The parallel serves to underscore the religious nature of the road and destination here.

function. The prototype for this scene is the gnomic description at Hesiod, *Opera* 287-292:

τὴν μὲν τοι κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι
 ῥηιδίως· λείη μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει·
 τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
 ἀθάνατοι· μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐς αὐτήν 290
 καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον· ἐπὶ δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται,
 ῥηιδίῃ δὲ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπὴ περ εὐδύσα. (Hes. *Op.* 287-292)

Inferiority it is possible for you to get in abundance,
 easily: the way is smooth, and very nearby it lies.
 In front of [*A*]rete it is sweat the immortal gods
 placed: the road is great and steep to her 290
 and rough at first. But when the top is attained,
 then it is easy, despite its previous difficulty.¹⁶

The correspondences between this passage and the Mountain of *Arete* are clear;¹⁷ even on a most basic level, the fact that both mention or imply a Mountain, a difficult way to *Arete*, and the sweat involved in getting up the way, draws the passages closely together in the reader's mind.

Hesiod wrote a didactic poem (*The Works and Days*), which is interspersed with *gnomai*.¹⁸ The fact that, in the central scene on the Shield of Achilles, a Hesiodic intertext occurs, which itself is allegorical and didactic – a specifically gnomic part of a didactic text – suggests didacticism on the part of Quintus here.¹⁹ The provision of didacticism for the Shield in the *Posthomeric*, via the context and nature of this intertext, can then be read further in any correspondences with this scene on the Shield, as I argue below. Within a Shield that follows the Iliadic Shield in its mythological nature and overall descriptive framework, this intertext causes the scene to be the most original (that is, the most non-Homeric) feature of the Posthomeric Shield.²⁰ The reader identifies the

16 All passages from Hesiod are from Solmsen / Merkelbach / West (³1990). There has been some debate on the meaning of the last line. Do the feminine adjectives refer to *Arete* or to the way to *Arete*? The position of ὁδός in line 288 makes it unlikely that it is the subject, despite West's (1978) 230 suggestion. A grammatically more sensible answer (made to me by N. Dümmler) is to take *Arete* as subject. For this solution see also Verdenius (1985) 151.

17 So Köchly (1850) 265-266; it is not necessary here to detail the verbal correspondences, since James / Lee (2000) 52 have already provided suitable illustration of these.

18 West (1988) XVIII.

19 Becker (1995) 41, of the Iliadic ecphrasis, writes: "The bard [...] acts as our guide as we imagine the images." I am going further than this: the bard acts as our guide wherever the theme occurs.

20 As James / Lee (2000) 52 point out.

intrusion of Hesiod within a Shield that is Homeric-emulative, and is forced to interpret.

Quintus is being didactic about an ethic: the ethic that the Mountain of *Arete* presents is that through *ponos* few get to achieve *Arete*. Throughout the *Posthomeric*, *kudos* is identified as synonymous with *Arete*, reflecting the original (Iliadic) martial meaning used in the poem.²¹ This ethic is first found at Q.S. 1.738: πόνῳ δ' ἄρα κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ “*kudos* follows *ponos*” (where *Arete* is replaced by *kudos*), itself a Hesiodic intertext.²² Within the Mountain of *Arete* scene, the close connection existing between *ponos* and *Arete* / *kudos* is reflected in the juxtaposition of τρηχὺ with ζαθέης (50): divine status can be achieved only by rugged paths (*ponos*) up the Mountain of *Arete*. Thus the Mountain of *Arete* on the Shield of Achilles must be read with the running theme in mind of *kudos* or *arete* as contingent upon *ponos*. The thematic echoes expand and expound the idea that the Mountain figure contains.

Numerous other intertexts for the Mountain of *Arete* have been suggested by scholars.²³ I would like to discuss three excerpts from Lucian, unnoticed by these scholars,²⁴ for the insight they give us into the Posthomeric Mountain of *Arete*. First, I wish to draw attention to *Verae Historiae* 2.18.11-12:²⁵

τῶν δὲ Στωϊκῶν οὐδεὶς παρῆν· ἐτὶ γὰρ ἐλέγοντο ἀναβαίνειν τὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὄρθιον λόφον. (Lucian *VH* 2.18.11-12)

21 See James / Lee (2000) 274-275.

22 This line is spoken by Thersites to Achilles, in a gnomic-charged speech. This echoes πλούτῳ δ' ἀρετὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ (Hes. *Op.* 313) “*arete* and *kudos* follow wealth”. Cf. Vian (1963) 164.

23 James / Lee (2000) 52-54 have the best discussion of intertexts for this scene generally. See also Vian (1966) 203-205. Relevant as well, in terms of the influence of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, are Fitzgerald / White (1983) 37. Most of the suggested parallels contain an idea of *two* ways, one to *Arete*, and the other to *Kakia*, or *Apate* (e.g. Ceb. *Tab.* 15.3-33.2 [with Fitzgerald / White (1983) 24], and principally Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.22-23). In this scene on the Shield describing the Mountain of *Arete*, no such demarcation of two ways is made – rather, there is properly only one way, up which only few manage to ascend. It is true that there are many small paths covered with rocks preventing men from the one true path (Q.S. 5.53-54), but there is no mention of another path to another abstract (moral) quality. This is also the case in the instructive words of Achilles to his son at 14.195-200 – all that is important is the character of those attempting to reach the heights of *Arete* (14.195-196).

24 Vian (1966) 204 identifies Lucian *Merc.Cond.* 42 as an intertext. There, however, Lucian explicitly imitates Cebes, and presents an allegory in the tradition of ‘The Choice of Heracles’, which, strictly speaking, is not the same idea as the image on the Shield, as discussed above. Another relevant intertext according to Vian (1966) 204 is Lucian *VH* 2.30; despite the similar vocabulary, the very different context of the text there decreases the intertext's relevance. On the nature of Lucian's satire generally, see Robinson (1979) 30-32, and Hall (1981).

25 I would like to thank Prof. Dr. W. Burkert for pointing out this passage to me. The passages from Lucian are from Macleod (1972-1987).

None of the Stoics were present; for they were said to be too busy trying to get up the steep hill of *[A]rete*.

This excerpt from the *True Histories* finds Lucian at the ‘Isle of the Blessed’, where he meets various famous personages from history and mythology. He wonders where the Stoics are, after seeing so many famous figures from the history of Greek mythology, literature, and philosophy. He is informed that the Stoics are absent because they are climbing the Hill of *Arete*. Both this passage and the scene in the Posthomeric ephrasis describe a hill (or Mountain) of *Arete* (λόφος – ὄρος, Q.S. 5.50) which is steep (ὄρθιος – αἰπὰ κέλευθα Q.S. 5.55; cf. ὑψηλή Q.S. 5.52) and which few are able to climb. In Lucian we read an additional element – that Stoics themselves climb the Mountain. Therefore the Lucianic passage emphasises the ‘Hill’ (or Mountain) of *Arete* as inherently, by this time, having its identity in the system of Stoic philosophy. I suggest, therefore, that the Mountain of *Arete* in the *Posthomeric* is also Stoic in nature. My argument is strengthened by reference to another passage in Lucian.

Lucian’s *Vitarum Auctio* 23 is a typically satirical dialogue, where the author summarily sweeps through the chief philosophies of antiquity, and introduces (and ridicules) the main exponents of these philosophies. Lucian introduces the reader to the famous Stoic Chrysippus in chapter 23, who is asked by the interlocutor: τί πράξεις πρὸς τὸ ἀκρότατον τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀφικόμενος; “What will you do after you have arrived at the highest point of *[A]rete*?” While there is no explicit mention of a Hill this time, even though the superlative adjective and the participle suggest one, the intertext from the *Verae Historiae* implies that this should be assumed.²⁶ Lucian, in this sketch, is selecting the stereotypes of each philosophy that he is describing (that is, the most readily identifiable for the reader), and has chosen for Stoicism τὸ ἀκρότατον τῆς ἀρετῆς. This choice as a stereotype for Stoic philosophy has an impact again on our reading of the identity of the Mountain of *Arete* on the Posthomeric Shield.

Discussion of one more Lucianic dialogue, the *Hermotimus*, influences our understanding of the Mountain figure. The dialogue parodically involves discussion of the nature and purpose of the Stoics’ Mountain of *Arete* (especially chapters 2-15).²⁷ The Stoic interlocutor Hermotimus attempts to defend his philosophy as symbolised in the Stoa’s Mountain of *Arete*. The Hesiodic origin of the Mountain of *Arete* on the Posthomeric Shield of Achilles, and (as I argue) its Stoic characteristics, are illuminated by reference to Lucian *Hermotimus* 2, where the

26 See LSJ s.v. ἄκρος 1. ἀφικνέομαι and πρὸς imply motion to this highest point. ἀφικνέομαι also has a secondary meaning of attainment of a goal, not necessarily implying motion (see LSJ s.v.). Turner (1961) 161 translates thus (my italics): “What will you do once you’ve reached the top of the *Hill* of Virtue?”

27 The latest thorough treatment of the dialogue is that of von Möllendorff (2000b).

Stoic interlocutor Hermotimus paraphrases the Hesiodic passage quoted above where the way to *Arete* is described.

ἡ δ' Ἀρετὴ πάνυ πόρρω κατὰ τὸν Ἡσίοδον οἰκεῖ καὶ ἔστιν ὁ οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν
μακρὸς τε καὶ ὄρθιος καὶ τρηχύς, ἰδρῶτα οὐκ ὀλίγον ἔχων τοῖς ὁδοιπόροις.
(Lucian *Herm.* 2)

Arete according to Hesiod dwells very far away and there exists a way to her which is long, steep, and rough, with lots of sweat for the travellers.

The Stoic interlocutor derives his philosophical system's image – the Mountain of *Arete* – explicitly from Hesiod. So here on the Shield of Achilles, the Mountain of *Arete* can be seen as a Stoic reading of Hesiod as well, where both contexts – literary and philosophical – should be taken into account.

The three passages discussed above prove that the Mountain of *Arete* on the Shield of Achilles derives a substantial proportion of its identity from a Stoic image, and therefore from Stoicism itself, whatever Stoicism by the time of the *Posthomerica* truly means.²⁸ When this image is taken together with its expansion, the Tree of *Arete* at 14.195-200 (as discussed below), and in particular Achilles' advice to his son at 14.201-206, where he advises his son to be neither too overcome by the bitterness of misfortune, nor to be too joyful in good fortune (202-203 – a clear example of the Stoic [doctrine of] indifference to external events), the presence of Stoicism is, I submit, undeniable.²⁹ The reader of the *Posthomerica*, within Late Antiquity, would most likely associate the image on the Shield of Achilles with Stoicism, even if, by that time, Stoicism no longer had a strong separate identity from other, similar, philosophical systems.

The Stoic nature of the image, established above, unavoidably influences, in some way, the force of *Arete*, in addition to its Homeric (and Hesiodic) meaning. The two values of the term, in my opinion, enable the reader to read not only the simple Homeric force of *Arete* in correspondences, but also its Stoic value. It is as

28 Thanks are due to P. Schubert who pointed out to me that by this time the Stoa was on a gradual decline. The scarcity of sources for the philosophies of this period, and the dubious validity of a date of third century A.D. for Quintus, mean that any argument against Stoicism in the *Posthomerica* does not rest on a firm basis.

29 Cf. Brennan (2005) 35, 38, and Hadas (1958) 24. It is surprising that James / Lee (2000) 52-54 do not mention Stoicism in connection with the image, but see James / Lee (2000) 12-13 on the general influence of Stoicism in the poem; see also Köchly (1850) XCV-XVI. The evidence for Stoicism does not exclude the influence of Hesiod: both Hesiod, and Stoicism, are read in the image. The vision of Achilles to Neoptolemus in book 14 is arguably influenced by the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero: see Keydell (1963) 1292, and Keydell (1949/50) 87-88; Vian (1959a) 76 n. 6 admits the Stoic nature of the speech of Achilles, but argues that it derives nothing from previous literary sources. For my purposes, it is a consensus on the Stoic nature that matters.

primarily as a reflection of Stoicism that the Mountain of *Arete* is portrayed in such 'divine' and allegorical terms.³⁰

One crucial point should be addressed before continuing: why does Quintus accommodate Stoicism on the Shield of Achilles, and incorporate a Stoic ethos throughout the poem? The answer is another paper in itself, and lies outwith the aims of this current one, which focus on the role of the reader, and the intertextual complications in inscribing difference in the Posthomeric Shield of Achilles.³¹

Mise-en-Abîme and the Shield of Achilles

I turn now to discuss the Mountain of *Arete* on the Shield of Achilles in terms of its correspondences, and the effect the figure's meaning and nature has on them, and conversely, the greater understanding of the figure we gain through analysis of correspondences. If an image that has multiple correspondences throughout a text has a clear link with a philosophical system, our reading of the correspondences must also accommodate this philosophy. I move now, with this intertextual background in mind, to discuss the way in which the Mountain of *Arete* functions as *mise-en-abîme* for a recurring theme in the poem.

Some definitions are required before proceeding: what do I mean by '*mise-en-abîme*', and in what ways does it differ from 'allegory'? Lucian Dällenbach, in his formative study of the term, simplified it to "*any aspect enclosed within a work that shows a similarity with the work that contains it*".³² Dällenbach does proceed, in his study, to present more complex definitions of the term based on an

30 It is also significant that the motivating filter for the Hesiodic intertext is an allegory, within an epic text written in Late Antiquity. While allegory can be read as didactic in nature (cf. Fletcher [1964] 120, and Toohey [1996] 5-7 on narrative epic as didactic generally; see also Fränkel [1975] 113), the literary-cultural context in which the *Posthomeric* exist encourages the reader to take account of the doctrines behind this allegorizing when interpreting the Posthomeric Shield. Late Antique literary-culture was marked by allegorizing of the Homeric poems, and particularly of the Shield of Achilles. The Iliadic Shield of Achilles, and its fabrication, moreover, was understood in antiquity "as the expression of a philosophically conceived cosmogony and cosmology" (Hardie [1986] 340; cf. Coulter [1976] 26 on the partisan approach to reading ancient texts). If we can read the didacticism present here from the influence of Hesiod as extending to the reader's level of 'being', then the Stoic doctrine of the Mountain of *Arete*, and the world it represents as *mise-en-abîme*, is an attempted reflection of the world we live in, and an attempt to say how we should live in the *cosmos*, beyond the level of the characters in the poem. This 'theory' can be expounded at length, in relation to Late Antique cosmological interpretations of Homer. I prefer, in this paper at any rate, to remain firmly within the world of the poem.

31 For Stoicism in the *Posthomeric* as a whole, see Vian (1963) XVII-XVIII, García (1990), and James / Lee (2000) 12-13, 146, and 155. I would like to express my gratitude to N. Dümmler for her perceptive suggestions for improvement to this section.

32 Dällenbach (1989) 36 (the italics in the quotation are his). He by no means invents the term, but simply sets down definitions and functions in an attempt to stabilise the figure's meaning.

understanding of modern works of fiction where the figure is followed. For my purposes, this definition, which the rest of his study never contradicts, is sufficient for an understanding of the figure's use in the *Posthomeric*.³³ The Shield of Achilles, and in particular the Mountain of *Arete*, show similarity with the rest of the text on a much more explicit and definable level than is the case for the Iliadic Shield of Achilles.³⁴ I am not suggesting that *mise-en-abîme* is allegory, although there is a clear allegorical aspect to the Shield.³⁵ Allegory, which is more closely aligned with symbolism,³⁶ hints at a hidden meaning constructed by the interpreter's predisposed assumptions of the author's intentions.³⁷ *Mise-en-abîme* does not need an intentionalist approach, or an understanding of the historical *sedes*, but is simply a literary device (used by the reader) that overlaps and constructs meaning in the surrounding narrative, as the reader identifies correspondences.³⁸

The principal textual correspondences with the Mountain of *Arete* are gnomic. Essentially the Mountain of *Arete* functions (as *mise-en-abîme*) as the motivating centre of a nexus of *gnomai* that echo it, and further, expand upon it, and even expound it, according to the situation in the text where the *gnome* is spoken. I mentioned above the places where these corresponding *gnomai* occur in

33 The English title of his study, "The Mirror in the Text", is aptly suggestive of the function of *mise-en-abîme*: the figure is used to reflect in a smaller compass the whole work of literature (Dällenbach [1989] 36). For recent use of *mise-en-abîme* as a means of interpreting other classical texts, see Rinon's (2006) 208-225 study of the Song of Demodocus in the *Odyssey*.

34 For the Shield of Achilles within the *Iliad*, see, chiefly, Taplin (2001) 342-364. Cf. Shannon (1975) 29, on the type of symbolism, in his view, involved in the Iliadic Shield. In terms of poetics, however, Becker (1995) 5 treats the Iliadic ecphrasis "as a *mise-en-abîme* of the poetics, [...] in ekphrasis not only does the bard become one of us, an audience, but also the description itself, metonymically, becomes a model for the poem".

35 Cf. Dällenbach (1989) 44.

36 Coulter (1976) 43.

37 Coulter (1976) 44, and Rollinson (1981) IX. I am constructing my reading of the nature of allegory here on Late Antique conceptions and uses of the figure, where intention was key; cf. Coulter (1976) 45: "The attribution of symbolic status to elements of a text, therefore, rested on, among other things, the assumption that literary texts were to be read as an *intentional* form of communication and that the reader was chiefly alerted to that intention by symbols consciously employed by the author." The interpreter ("a representative of a sectarian point of view, the advocate of some religion or philosophical school", Coulter [1976] 19) takes the meaning from the text required for that interpretation.

38 Dällenbach (1989) 46-47 includes as indicators for *mise-en-abîme* "repetition of an evocative setting and a combination of characters" and "textual repetition of one or more expressions relating to the primary narrative within the reflexive passage", the latter of which fits most closely with the *mise-en-abîme* in book 5. While obviously allegorical, the scene containing the Mountain of *Arete* can and does also function as *mise-en-abîme*, to the extent that, although a thematic microcosm of the fictional text, it "superimpose[s] itself" semantically on the macrocosm that contains [it] (Dällenbach [1989] 59).

the *Posthomerica*;³⁹ the most significant of these correspondences, for my purposes here, are the *gnomai* at 14.195-203, 12.287-296, and 5.596-597.

Before discussing these particular *gnomai*, I ought to establish the important place *gnomai* have in the *Posthomerica* as a whole. They provide one of the most striking features of the poem's poetics, but also one of the most despised and understudied within an area of research undergoing fresh study in other authors.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, as with most research (or lack of it) into the poetics of the *Posthomerica*, critics have either been dismissive of the merits of such study of *gnomai* in the poem, or, where such research has been carried out, have failed to appreciate the significance of their results.⁴¹ Statistical analysis of *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* illustrates the key place they have within the poem as a whole.⁴² There are a total of 132 *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica*.⁴³ This is itself significant. The *Iliad* has a total of 154 *gnomai*,⁴⁴ yet the *Posthomerica*, of nearly 8,800 lines

39 See n. 2, above.

40 Cf. especially Lardinois (1997) 213-234, on the *Iliad*, which has greatly influenced my study of *gnomai*. Aristotle, in his definition and discussion of γνῶμαι in literature (*Rh.* 1394a21-22), identified the feature as a general statement usually concisely expressed. This definition, similar to Quintilian's *vox universalis* (8.5.3), is the key to the understanding of *gnomai* in all literature. The *gnome* operates at different levels, allowing different levels of meaning and application (Stenger [2004] 8): on the one hand, it operates on a narrow basis, where the specific situation in the text acts as the motivation and focus of the *gnome* (Lardinois [1997] 214); on the other hand, the very generalising nature of the *gnome* can transfer applicability to the reader.

41 There has been no dedicated treatment of the subject to date. Köchly (1850) XCV-XCVI, gives a short treatment mixed with a derisory bias in which he acknowledges the *gnomai*'s frequency, but slights their importance (XCV): "Ipsa Quinto maxime peculiaris est. Frequentissime enim et paene ad nauseam usque *locos communes* admiscuit, qui maximam partem sapientiam vulgarissimam produunt." He lists some, but by no means all, of the *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica*. Paschal (1904) 44, Kakridis (1962) 178-181, and James / Lee (2000) 12-13, give very brief details. Vian (1963) XXXVII ("Plusieurs de ses récits tendent à illustrer une pensée édifiante, qui s'élève rarement au dessus du lieu commun") and Campbell (1981) 132 n. 388 ("Gnomic elements [...] confront the reader of Q[uintus] at every turn [...] [They are] [s]ententious verbiage [especially in Nonnus] [...]") reflect the obvious influence of Köchly's comments on all later scholarship.

42 My MSc dissertation (University of Edinburgh, 2005) focused on *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica*. This is the first time that such statistics have been researched or presented.

43 I have attempted to separate 'strings', or combinations of *gnomai* – something Ahrens (1937) 12-38, in his study of *gnomai* in archaic Greek poetry, failed to do for the *Iliad*. I have not attempted to distinguish between an *enthymeme* and a *gnome*, for the simple reason that both are *gnomai*. An *enthymeme* apparently adds an explanation within a *gnome* (Arist. *Rh.* 1394b21-22). Where relevant, I have not separated a double *gnome* (see Lardinois [1997] 214) when the sense required both 'gnomai' to be taken as a single *gnome* – often the second 'gnome' is a qualifying extension of the first – like an *enthymeme*. Previous scholars have given erroneous estimates: cf. Köchly (1850) XCV-XVI, for a brief list, and Kakridis (1962) 178-181. The latter writes that there are about 90 *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica*.

44 Lardinois (1997) 215; I do not agree with Lardinois, however. In his totals, he has added 73 *gnomai* to the total of 81 that Ahrens (1937) 12-38 came up with. Lardinois (1997) 215 includes *Il.* 2.24-25 in his list, which is already in Ahrens (1937) 14; he also includes *Il.* 9.309, 312-313, and 12.212-214. I can not see how these can be *gnomai*: they are not universal in their applica-

in length, is slightly more than half as long as the *Iliad*.⁴⁵ This statistic gives the *Posthomerica* a proportionately much larger volume of *gnomai* according to the size of each epic.⁴⁶ Also, when one considers the smaller proportion of speeches in the *Posthomerica* compared with other epics,⁴⁷ and the fact that in most epics including the *Posthomerica*, *gnomai* mostly occur in speeches,⁴⁸ the number of *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* (comparatively speaking) is remarkably large.⁴⁹ *Gnomai*, as a poetic feature of the text, must be taken seriously.

The ecphrastic scene where the Mountain of *Arete* is described is essentially a *gnome* spoken by the primary narrator. The other *gnomai* under discussion are spoken by secondary narrators, which reflect the ‘*gnome*’ in the Shield of Achilles. Of the 132 *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica*, 33 are spoken by the primary narrator.⁵⁰ This number is in stark contrast to the three in the *Iliad*, and the two in the *Odyssey*.⁵¹ This marked difference – the fact that more than a quarter of the *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* are spoken by the primary narrator – requires explanation.⁵²

tion, while 9.309, and 9.312-313 especially, are surprising inclusions in the totals, however much the reader may concur with the sentiments directed at Odysseus. I submit, therefore, that there are 150 *gnomai* in the *Iliad*. I use Lardinois’ figures and analysis for convenience, however.

45 James / Lee (2000) 1.

46 1/68 lines on average in the *Posthomerica*.

47 *Iliad*: 44% of the whole epic; *Odyssey*: 56%; Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica*: 29%; Quintus Smyrnaeus’ *Posthomerica*: 24%; Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*: 36% (James / Lee [2000] 12).

48 James / Lee (2000) 12.

49 Caution must be exercised however: we must not rush to conclusions such as Campbell’s (1981) 132 n. 388 or that of Paschal (1904) 44, who states that they “detract much, more than any other thing, from the Homeric character of Quintus’ poem”. The large number of *gnomai* may be due to the hyper-Homeric effect of the poem, where the poet picks a feature of the Homeric epic-technique and attempts to emulate it (cf. James / Lee [2000] 1 and 19, of similes, which occur 1/44 lines as compared with 1/77 in the *Iliad*). Another influence may be the nature of Late Antique poetry – see Campbell (1981) 132 n. 388, and Hopkinson (1994a) 5 and (1994b) 123, both of Nonnus; cf. Roberts (1989) 37, of Late Latin poetry. I prefer to take both explanations as contributory factors for the high incidence of *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica*. An epic poet exerts his own style by drawing on particular features of the epic code, which, in combination, form that epic poet’s text (Conte [1986] 143).

50 Q.S. 1.31-32, 72-73, 116-117, 809-810; 2.83-85, 263-264; 3.9-10; 4.64, 66-69, 379, 434-435; 7.9-10, 390, 635-636; 9.194, 347-349, 385; 11.274-277, 282; 12.342-343, 388; 13.12-13, 204-205, 248-250, 269-270, 287-289 (x2 *gnomai*), 495, 559; 14.53-54, 98-100, 112-114, 389. For many of the narratological terms that I use in this section, I am indebted to de Jong (1997), who provides clear explanation of narratology in Homer.

51 This practice (in terms of the subject matter and incidence of *gnomai* spoken by the primary narrator in the *Posthomerica*) is non-Homeric: all three *gnomai* spoken by the primary narrator in the *Iliad* have a single theme, that of man’s inferiority to the gods: *Il.* 16.688-690 (applied to Patroclus), 20.265-266 (applied to Aeneas), 21.264 (applied to Achilles). The *Odyssey*-instances are *Od.* 5.79-80, and 16.161. For this see Lardinois (1997) 230, 232.

52 Lardinois (1997) 232.

I suggest that didactic purpose can be read because of the sheer number of *gnomai* spoken by the primary narrator in the *Posthomerica*, drawing the reader to the interpretation required, at their level.⁵³ The very fact that there exists no distinction in subject-matter between some of the primary narrator-spoken and secondary narrator-spoken *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* leads the reader to reread all similar *gnomai* as spoken by the secondary narrators in the light of the similar *gnomai* spoken by the primary narrator. Further, by reflecting primary-narrator-spoken *gnomai* in *gnomai* spoken by characters who function as ‘author figures’, the poet manages to create ‘mouthpieces’ of the primary narrator.⁵⁴ For this reason, the *gnomai* I have selected for discussion operate at the level of the speaker and addressee, the narrator and the speaker, and the reader and the narrator.

I turn now to specific examples in the text that correspond to the Mountain of *Arete*. In my first one, *Arete* is didactically applied to Neoptolemus in the words of the deified Achilles (14.185-222). As Vian points out, the purpose of Achilles’ words is primarily hortatory.⁵⁵ The exhortation centres on the representation of the *Tree of Arete*:

κεῖνος δ’ οὐ ποτ’ ἀνὴρ Ἀρετῆς ἐπὶ τέρμαθ’ ἵκανε
 ὅ τινι μὴ νόος ἐστὶν ἐναΐσιμος· οὐνεκ’ ἄρ’ αὐτῆς
 πρέμνον δὺσβατόν ἐστι, μακροὶ δὲ οἱ ἄχρις ἐπ’ αἴθρη
 ὄζοι ἀνέξῃ(ν)θ’· ὁπόσοισι δὲ κάρτος ὀπηδεῖ
 καὶ πόνος, ἐκ καμάτου πολυγηθέα καρπὸν ἀμῶνται
 εἰς Ἀρετῆς ἀναβάντες εὐστεφάνου κλυτὸν ἔρνος. (Q.S. 14.195-200)

53 Cf. Stenger (2004) 26, who states that the primary narrator can use secondary narrators to direct reader response. *Gnomai* of course have an inherent didactic nature anyway – but when spoken by the primary narrator, this didactic nature is drawn attention to in another status.

54 Dällenbach (1989) 52, who states that satisfaction of three criteria is required for ‘authentication’ of authorial substitute: “1 choosing agents who are not integral to the plot, which leads to the appointment of (a) old people, (b) foreigners or (c) companions [...] 2 recruiting qualified personnel from among those who specialize in, or make their living from, the truth [...] 3 in the absence of such ‘organs of truth’, doing without them and using the services of a work of art [...]” It is remarkable how these criteria constructed (essentially) for modern fiction are satisfied by the *Posthomerica*: Nestor (the first gnomonic example to be discussed) is the wise old man (too old to be of much use physically – 12.271) whose words are characteristically (personally) historical, and therefore truthful; Achilles, in the second gnomonic example, is dead and deified, and personally outside the narrative; Odysseus, the third gnomonic example, involves interpretative difficulties that I will deal with. The poet also has the work of art – the Shield of Achilles, which the “authorial substitutes” (Dällenbach [1989] 77) refer to (obliquely) and expound. In essence then, the *gnomai* are profoundly ‘primary-narrator-reflective’, with the added weight that intertextuality brings to reading of the characters, and to the Shield.

55 Vian (1969) 160. The traditional purpose of the vision is the necessary sacrifice of Polyxena; the case is no different here: 14.231-241 – cf. Vian (1969) 160 n. 4.

That man never climbed to the heights of *Arete*,
 whose mind is not right within him. For her
 trunk is hard to climb, and right into heaven the great
 branches stretch out; to as many as strength
 and *ponos* attend, they pluck, after much exertion, the fruits of great delight,
 climbing up the glorious tree of fair-crowned *Arete*.

195

200

The appearance of Achilles in his son's dream has been the object of considerable comment, particularly in the matter of sources.⁵⁶ Its real function has not been appreciated, however. Here we have an explicit commendation of the ecphrasis on the Shield of Achilles by a secondary narrator. The image of the Mountain of *Arete* has seemingly been altered into a Tree of *Arete*.⁵⁷ The Mountain of *Arete* on the Shield of Achilles receives an exposition by Achilles himself. The receiver of this exposition is, on the primary level, Neoptolemus, who is spoken of as the heir and seeming reincarnation of his father from his first appearance and onwards in the *Posthomeric*.⁵⁸ Moreover, the original recipient and bearer of the Shield expounds the meaning of its key scene to his heir, and therefore heir of the Shield.⁵⁹ Achilles could have spoken about his deeds of war, or indeed about another of the scenes on the Shield, especially that which depicts his parents' wedding (Q.S. 5.73-79). Instead, the poet makes Achilles the expositor of the Mountain of *Arete*, and more particularly, the ideal that the figure connotes, namely that *Arete* can only be gained by *ponos* (14.199 – corresponding to, and clarifying, ἰδρώοντες 5.56).⁶⁰

The didactic, paternal tone of the passage, spoken by a divine figure (the dead and deified Achilles), in my opinion, reflects the key explication of the *mise-en-abîme* in book 5, and of the corresponding series of *gnomai* in the poem.⁶¹

56 Vian (1969) 159-162 summarises the findings of scholars.

57 There is nothing in the text to suggest that this Tree is not the *phoinix* on the Shield spoken of at 5.51-52. The implication is that after climbing the Mountain of *Arete*, one must then climb the Tree which leads to *Arete*, who stands on top. To N. Dümmler thanks are due for this insightful suggestion.

58 Cf. Q.S. 7.177, and especially 7.185-186.

59 For Neoptolemus as Shield-bearer, see Q.S. 7.195-197, and 12.303-305. The second of these examples occurs just before the in-proem and the procession of the heroes into the wooden horse, poetically and narratologically charged moments that draw attention to the key place Neoptolemus has in the epic as a second Achilles. On the characterisation of Neoptolemus, see Boyten's contribution in this volume.

60 For 14.199, cf. the verbally and thematically similar words spoken by Deiphobus, as he encourages the Trojans to arm and fight, at Q.S. 9.105: ἀνδράσιν ἐκ καμάτοιο πέλει θαλίη τε καὶ ὄλβος. "For men there exists blossoming wealth after labour."

61 Not all of the correspondences are actual *gnomai* of course. Note the words spoken by Nestor at Q.S. 12.262-263 – in a speech that motivates Neoptolemus to speak, thus causing his gnomic answer discussed below (12.287-296): νῦν γὰρ τέρμα πόνοιο θεοὶ καὶ ἀμύμονα νίκη / ἦμιν ἐελδομένοισι φίλας ἐς χεῖρας ἄγουσιν. "For now the gods bring an end to *ponos* and

Achilles and Neoptolemus, father instructing son, mirror the status of the primary narrator and primary narratee (the reader).⁶² Achilles assumes the *persona* of a didactic narrator by presenting his son with the primary narrator's (ecphrastic) vision of the way to live (as the epic / military vocabulary proves [198, 201] in the context of battle). But more importantly, the theme is a universal one beyond the battlefield: anyone can gain the fruits of *Arete* (ὁπόσοισι 198 makes this clear); all that is required is *ponos* (199).⁶³ Therefore, all correspondences with the ecphrastic Mountain of *Arete* must be examined along with the explicatory words of Achilles at Q.S. 14.195-200.⁶⁴

Neoptolemus, as the next example for discussion shows (Q.S. 12.287-296), is represented as the person who, chiefly, engages in this *ponos*.

ἔσσι πατρὸς κείνιοι βίη καὶ εὐφρονι μῦθῳ
 ἀντιθέου Ἀχιλλῆος· ἔολπα δὲ σῆσι χέρεσσιν
 Ἀργείους Πριάμοιο διαπραθέειν κλυτὸν ἄστυ.
 ὃς δ' ἄρ' ἐκ καμάτοιο μέγα κλέος ἔσσεται ἡμῖν
 290 πολλὰ πονησαμένοισι κατὰ κλόνον ἄλγεα λυγρά.
 ἄλγεα μὲν παρὰ ποσσὶ θεοὶ θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν,
 ἐσθλὰ δὲ πολλὸν ἄπωθε· πόνον δ' ἐς μέσσον ἔλασσαν·
 τοῦνεκα ρηιδίῃ μὲν ἐς ἀργαλήν κακότητα
 αἰζηοῖσι κέλευθος, ἀνιρῇ δ' ἐπὶ κῦδος,
 295 μέσφ' ὅτε τις στονόεντα πόνον διὰ ποσσὶ περήσῃ. (Q.S. 12.287-296)

You really are the son of that father of yours – in strength and in wise speech –;
the godlike Achilles. I hope by your hands

blameless victory / into the dear hands of us who have been hoping for it.” *τέρμα πόνοιο* is echoed by 14.195 Ἀρετῆς ἐπὶ τέρμασθ’ verbally and thematically. The parallel underscores the close connection between *Arete* and *ponos*.

62 It has been pointed out that Achilles' speech here, corresponding with the allegorical counterpart in book 5, has an application to Achilles himself, who chose the short but glorious life outlined by him at *Il.* 9.410-416: so James / Lee (2000) 53, following Köchly (1850) 266. It is doubtful whether this is exactly the kind of *kudos* that Achilles achieves in the *Iliad*; for this *kudos* cf. Griffin (1980) 99-100. Moreover, it is not suggested either here by Achilles to his son, or in the scene on the Shield, that 'a short but glorious' life is the ideal proposed in the poem. Q.S. 5.56 in fact suggests the opposite – *Arete* is only obtained after (temporarily) a long hard effort.

63 Sinon is also held up as the embodiment of this *ponos*. The primary narrator, by means of a *gnome* (14.112-114, of Sinon's *kudos*), highlights Sinon as such: the depiction of his torture there echoes some of the vocabulary spoken by the shade of Achilles at 14.198-199. Also, in the torture scene, *κάρτος* at 12.370 and 12.373 echoes the *κάρτος* at 198, while Sinon's resolute conduct for the greater good of the Greeks embodies the *ponos* spoken of at 199. The endurance under torture is, most likely, a specifically Stoic ideal (cf. Hadas [1958] 24, and Tarrant [1985] 23). For more on the significance of the Sinon episode, see Hadjitofti's contribution in this volume.

64 The words of Achilles there at Q.S. 14.195-200 must also be read within their context, that is, the gnomic advice that Achilles gives his son on how to behave towards others (14.189-194).

that the Argives will raze to the ground Priam's famous city.
 Late then from battle toil great glory will fall to us 290
 who have suffered so many grievous pains in the fray.
 Troubles are what the gods set at the feet of men,
 and good they thrust far away; and *ponos* they drove in between them;
 therefore, the path to grievous *kakotes* is easy
 for men, but that to *kudos* is difficult 295
 – which someone attains only by a trek of painful *ponos*.

Nestor speaks this *gnome* in praise of the conduct of Neoptolemus. He (unknowingly) enlarges upon the meaning of the allegory of the Mountain of *Arete* and its exposition by Achilles to Neoptolemus in book 14, bringing to the reader's attention the force of the *Arete* on the Shield of Achilles within the context of the poem. There are several important elements for discussion here. First, I wish to indicate the verbal and thematic echoes with the figure on the Posthomeric Shield, its exposition by Achilles in book 14, together with the passage quoted earlier from Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

Strictly speaking, there are no exact verbal correspondences between this passage and the Mountain of *Arete* on the Shield. There are thematic echoes, however, and the clear verbal link both have with the same Hesiodic passage. In the passage in book 12, two paths are mentioned (12.294-295). Verbally, these lines where the paths are described echo Hesiod: Q.S. 12.294-295 ῥηιδίη μὲν ἐς ἀργαλέην κακότητα / (...) κέλευθος has a close parallel at Hes. *Op.* 287-288: τὴν μὲν τοι κακότητα καὶ ἱλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι / ῥηιδίως· λείη μὲν ὁδός, and 12.295 ἀνιερὴ δ' ἐπὶ κῦδος at least thematically resembles *Op.* 290: μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐς αὐτήν. Thematically, the mention of paths corresponds with αἰπὰ κέλευθα at 5.55 on the Shield, and the difficult path to *kudos* (12.295 ἀνιερὴ δ' ἐπὶ κῦδος) the reader aligns with the ἀτραπιτοί (5.53) that keep men from the ἐὺν πάτον (5.54), and with the ἱερὸν οἶμον (5.56) that few ascend. The difficult journey up the Mountain of *Arete*, apparent especially at 5.53 ἀτραπιτοὶ θαμέεσσι διειργόμενοι σκολόπεσσι and at 5.56 παῦροι δ' ἱερὸν οἶμον ἀνήιον ἰδρώοντες, is reflected here at 12.296 μέσφ' ὅτε τις στονόνεντα πόνον διὰ ποσσὶ περήσης, where the abstract symbolic journey up the "Mountain" is now a less abstract metaphor of a journey through life to achieve goals. The obstacles on the paths are also paralleled: 12.292 ἄλγεα μὲν παρὰ ποσσὶ resembles 5.53 θαμέεσι (...) σκολόπεσσι. The exertion and stamina needed for this 'journey' is clear in the participle ἰδρώοντες (5.56 – an echo of Hes. *Op.* 289 as mentioned above), and this is reflected and expanded at 12.296 στονόνεντα πόνον.

These parallels make it clear that the poet, here, is drawing the reader's attention to the Mountain of *Arete*, as represented on the Shield in book 5. More particularly, we have here an embodiment of that *Arete* in the person of Neo-

ptolemus: the *gnome* spoken by Nestor has clear verbal correspondences with his words immediately preceding this *gnome*.⁶⁵ The connection the *gnome* makes suggests that the Greeks will achieve their aims after such a long, strenuous war, because of the attitude of Achilles' son, and in a sense, because of the *ponos* of the Greeks themselves. Their long suffering is rewarded, as Nestor explains in his gnomic summary of the ethic presented on the Shield as the Mountain of *Arete*. Nestor, as the old man figure – one of the *personae* that naturally reflect the primary narrator in *mise-en-abîme* – acts as a mouthpiece for the exposition of the Mountain of *Arete*, in a similar role to Achilles in book 14.⁶⁶

The way in which Nestor speaks of Neoptolemus as resembling his father (12.287-288) naturally leads the reader to look to the similar gnomic passage spoken by Achilles at Q.S. 14.195-200. One close verbal and thematic parallel draws the two passages together: 12.290 ἐκ καμάτοιο μέγα κλέος ἔσsetai ἡμῖν is paralleled by 14.199 ἐκ καμάτου πολυγηθέα καρπὸν ἀμῶνται. The thematic similarity implies that the fruit of the Tree of *Arete* is *kleos*, which itself is closely connected to *kudos* mentioned at 12.295. Both this gnomic speech by Nestor, and the words of the deified Achilles, have particular application to Neoptolemus. The poet is showing Neoptolemus to be the embodiment of the ideal represented on the Shield: *this* is how to live in war.⁶⁷ Thus, it is clear that, in this respect, the embodiment, here, of the description of *Arete* and the path to it on the Shield of Achilles, is in relation to the deeds of war (κατὰ κλόνον, 12.291).

The final gnomic correspondence I wish to discuss is spoken by Odysseus, in his speech of 'compassion' for the dead Ajax:⁶⁸

65 ἄλγεα (292) corresponds with ἄλγεα λυγρᾷ (291); πόνον (293) with πονησαμένοισι (291); and κῦδος (295) perhaps with κλέος (290).

66 Cf. Vian (1963) XVII, who states that Nestor is "le porte-parole de la pensée stoïcisante du poète".

67 What is also significant is the clear identification of *Arete* with the martial *kudos*. *Kudos* in the same *gnome* spoken by Nestor, is clearly meant to be won by the *ponos* of war – κατὰ κλόνον (12.291). Neoptolemus, in his reply to Nestor's near-encomium at 12.301-302, makes this emphasis clear – a reply that also reflects the *gnome* spoken by Priam at 2.38-40, and the *gnome* spoken by himself at 11.219-220, as he exhorts the Argives not to flee. *Kudos* occurs twenty-three times in the *Posthomerica*, reflecting the Iliadic definition of 'glory won in war' (cf. LSJ s.v. κῦδος). It occurs at 1.108, 738; 2.77; 3.197; 4.87, 305, 322, 577; 5.520; 6.451; 7.383, 566, 657; 8.472; 9.29; 12.252, 273, 295; 13.193, 248, 288; 14.113, and 118.

68 There are naturally other *gnomai* which explicate the Mountain of *Arete*, as I state in note 2 above. See, for example, the gnomic reviling of Achilles by Thersites at 1.736-740. πόνῳ δ' ἄρα κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ (Q.S. 1.738) "*kudos* follows *ponos*", in particular taps into the thematic ring that the Mountain of *Arete* and the Tree of *Arete* present. See the further discussion in note 22 above, and cf. James (2004) 274, on this passage: "Quintus shows a fondness for the moral commonplace of the need for hard work [...]" For a very similar *gnome*, see Q.S. 2.76-77, this time in the words of Paris.

ἀνδρὸς γὰρ πινυτοῖο καὶ ἄλγεα πόλλ' ἐπιόντα
τλῆναι ὑπὸ κραδίῃ στερεῇ φρενὶ μὴδ' ἀκάχησθαι. (Q.S. 5.596-597)

For it is of a wise man's nature even to withstand in his heart the many ills
that assail him and not to buckle, in his stout mind, under grief.

This *gnome* has particular resonance with the explanatory comments of Achilles to Neoptolemus at 14.202-203 (mentioned above), which build on the allegorical figure at 14.195-200. The idea behind the passage quoted above is that of endurance. Verbally it finds an echo at Q.S. 12.292 from the passage discussed above: ἄλγεα (...) τλῆναι (5.596-597) is paralleled by [ἄ]λγεα μὲν παρὰ ποσσὶ θεοὶ θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν (12.292), which itself is connected to, and explained by, στονόεντα πόνον διὰ ποσσὶ περήσης (12.296), due to the echo in ποσσὶ. There is implied a connection between enduring all the ills that assail one – a trait characteristic of a wise man (5.596) – and persevering up the difficult path of the Mountain of *Arete*.⁶⁹

Two other *gnomai* bear very close resemblance to this one spoken by Odysseus. James / Lee (2000) 146 astutely note the near identical *gnome* at 3.8-9, of Nestor's endurance over his son's death, spoken by the primary narrator.⁷⁰ The other *gnome* for comparison is also spoken by the primary narrator, this time with reference to Sinon, and his brave endurance under torture – Q.S. 12.388.⁷¹ These parallels exacerbate the fact of Ajax's inability to exercise such restraint, which is implied in Odysseus' words here, which he speaks in words of 'mourning' for his dead comrade.⁷² The fact that Odysseus' words echo *gnomai* spoken elsewhere by the primary narrator serves to underscore the authorial authenticity of his words here (almost, one could argue, knowingly on his part).

Odysseus ironically mourns over his former comrade, by tapping into the gnostic thematic ring that exists between the Mountain of *Arete* and the Tree of *Arete* in particular, and, therefore, by assuming an 'authorial' *persona* by present-

69 Cf. Q.S. 5.56, 12.296, 14.197-198, all of which imply perseverance up difficult paths.

70 Q.S. 3.8-9: ἀνδρὸς γὰρ πινυτοῖο περὶ φρεσὶ τλήμεναι ἄλγος / θαρσαλέως καὶ μὴ τι κατηφιόωντ' ἀκάχησθαι. "For it is of a wise man to endure grief in his mind / bravely and not to buckle in the face of misfortune." Verbal echoes are evident: ἀνδρὸς γὰρ πινυτοῖο is exactly the same in both (and in the same position); περὶ φρεσὶ τλήμεναι (3.8) resembles τλῆναι ὑπὸ κραδίῃ (5.597), ἄλγος (3.8) parallels ἄλγεα (5.596), and ἀκάχησθαι (3.9) exactly matches ἀκάχησθαι (5.597).

71 Q.S. 12.388: ἀνδρὸς γὰρ κρατεροῖο κακὴν ὑποτλῆναι ἀνάγκη. "For it is of a strong man to put up with grim compulsion." The position of ἀνδρὸς γὰρ κρατεροῖο echoes ἀνδρὸς γὰρ πινυτοῖο at 5.596, while ὑποτλῆναι finds a parallel at 5.597 τλῆναι ὑπὸ κραδίῃ.

72 Cf. James / Lee (2000) 146 here for references to the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*, and James (2004) 281, on Q.S. 3.8-9, where he states that these lines are "probably a conscious reference to the wise man's freedom from emotion according to Stoic philosophy".

ing *the* ethic of the text he exists within to the dead hero he cunningly outwitted.⁷³ The irony is made the more cutting since Odysseus speaks the words over the dead Ajax who has obviously failed in such an ideal, and is suggested by the exoneration Odysseus allows himself in Ajax's death (5.581-582). The parallels exhibit the poet's acute ability for manipulating reading, casting further meaning on words by implicating the text in correspondences, verbal and thematic.⁷⁴

The three examples discussed above, that expand upon the meaning of the Mountain of *Arete* on the Shield of Achilles, illustrate the function the figure has, in *mise-en-abîme*, throughout the whole text. The repetition of the theme of *kudos* or *Arete* through *ponos* acts as a unifying undercurrent throughout the epic, as spoken particularly by secondary narrators, and reflected especially in *gnomai*. The poet has set forth, on the Shield of Achilles, a pattern of conduct to be fulfilled by *ponos* – this pattern is expounded by secondary narrators as authorial substitutes (for example, Achilles and Nestor and even Odysseus). The reader can see the ideal embodied in the conduct of characters, particularly by means of *gnomai* that relate to, and intensify, the primary-narrator-*gnomai* in relation to such characters.

It is important to emphasise that the Shield of Achilles in the *Posthomerica* contains scenes other than the Mountain of *Arete* that the reader can also read as *mise-en-abîme*. Such a reading of other scenes on the Shield strengthens the case for reading the Mountain of *Arete* as *mise-en-abîme*. It is possible within the scope of this paper to discuss only one other of these scenes. Take for example the scene where the horrors of war are depicted:

ἐν δ' ἄρα καὶ πόλεμοι φθισήνορες, ἐν δὲ κυδοιμοί	25
ἀργαλέοι ἐνέκειντο. περικτείνοντο δὲ λαοί	
μῖγδα θοοῖς ἵπποισι· πέδον δ' ἅπαν αἵματι πολλῷ	
δευομένῳ ἦκτο κατ' ἀσπίδος ἀκαμάτοιο.	
ἐν δὲ Φόβος καὶ Δεῖμος ἔσαν στονόεσσά τ' Ἐνυώ,	
αἵματι λευγαλέῳ πεπαλαγμένοι ἄψα πάντα·	30
ἐν δ' Ἑρις οὐλομένη καὶ Ἑριννύες ὀβριμόθυμοι,	
ἥ μὲν ἐποτρύνουσα ποτὶ κλόνον ἄσχετον ἄνδρα	
ἐλθέμεν, αἱ δ' ὀλοοῖο πυρὸς πνείουσαι αὐτμήν.	
ἀμφὶ δὲ Κῆρες ἔθνυν ἀμείλιχοι, ἐν δ' ἄρα τῇσι	
φοῖτα λευγαλέου Θανάτου μένος· ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' αὐτῷ	35
Ἵσμῖναι ἐνέκειντο δυσηχέες, ὧν περὶ πάντων	
ἐκ μελέων εἰς οὐδας ἀπέρρειν αἷμα καὶ ἰδρώς.	

73 Note 5.592, where Odysseus explicitly refers to *Arete*; for intertextual relevancies, see Vian (1966) 41 n. 3, and James / Lee (2000) 146: *Od.* 11.548-560 is correctly identified for parallels – I doubt the sincerity of his compassion here in the *Posthomerica*, however, due to the apparent irony of the *gnome* he speaks.

74 Cf. Wenglingsky (1999) 79-80 on the poet's ability to "subvert traditional material".

ἐν δ' ἄρα Γοργόνες ἔσκον ἀναιδέες· ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρα σφι
 σμερδαλέοι πεπόνηντο περὶ πλοχμοῖσι δράκοντες
 αἰνὸν λιχμῶντες. ἀπειρέσιον δ' ἄρα θαῦμα 40
 δαίδαλα κεῖνα πέλοντο μέγ' ἀνδράσι δεῖμα φέροντα,
 οὐνεκ' ἔσαν ζωοῖσιν εἰκότα κινυμένοισι. (Q.S. 5.25-42)

Then there were also depicted men-destroying wars, there grievous 25
 fighting; at all quarters the warriors were killed
 along with their swift horses; it was as if the whole plain was drenched
 with much blood, on the unbreakable Shield.
 And here were *Phobos* and *Deimos* and *Enyo* that brings groans,
 splattered head to toe in baneful blood, 30
 and here destructive *Eris* and the fearless Furies,
Eris in the act of stirring up men to enter unbearable combat,
 the Furies breathing out destructive flames.
 In all directions the un pitying Fates rushed, and here, among them,
 the might of baneful *Thanatos* roams to and fro, and beside it 35
 the deafening *Hysminai* were depicted, all surrounded
 by blood and sweat which gushed from every part of them to the ground.
 In this part were the shameless Gorgons; about their
 hair were worked terrifying snakes,
 with tongues flickering terribly. A boundless wonder 40
 were those ornate scenes, bringing great fear to the beholder,
 because they looked as though they were moving creatures.

What is immediately striking about this scene is the number of personifications of entities of war described:⁷⁵ there is concentrated here, in *mise-en-abîme*, on the Shield, battle-description echoing verbally that found in many places in the *Posthomeric*, on a much wider scale, and of a different nature, than that found in the *Iliad*.⁷⁶ In particular, the opening of *Posthomeric* 11 has marked similarity to

75 Described at 5.29, 31, 34, 35, 36, and 38. Ἐννό is markedly Posthomeric (for which see James / Lee [2000] 47); in all, the personification occurs eleven times in the poem: 1.365, 2.525, 5.29, 8.186, 8.286, 8.425, 11.8, 11.152, 11.237, 12.437, and 13.85.

76 James (2004) 271, on 1.308-311 (where 1.310 has a particular resonance with 5.34-35), lists the textual parallels: "They are used to embellish a considerable number of battle narratives and are far more prominent than in the *Iliad*; cf. 5.25-40, 6.350-1, 8.186-7, 191-2, 286-90, 324-8, 425-6, 9.145-7, 10.53-65, 11.8-15, 151-3, 13.85." Cf. Vian (1969) 48 n. 2 for similar comments and references. The textual correspondences suggest that, here, the poet is concentrating, or indexing, his practice for battle-description that he carries out elsewhere. Above all, note the almost *verbatim* repetition here at 5.37 of a line from a battle narrative at 2.530-531; the correspondence allows the reader to go back and reread those lines in book 2 in the light of this ecphrastic passage (note the involvement of *Enyo* at 2.525). The inclusion of this line in the ecphrasis enables the reader to identify that the poet is basing his scene of war explicitly on his own poem and own descriptions, and *vice versa*, and that in some sense there is a clear indexing or *mise-en-abîme* present here not evident on the Iliadic Shield, which instead presents a picture of human life outside the subject-matter of the poem (Edwards [1991] 209, of the Iliadic Shield):

this scene. At 11.8-12, *Eris*, *Enyo*, the Furies, the Fates, *Phobos*, and *Deimos* are all described, all of which are mentioned in the ecphrastic ‘war’ scene here.⁷⁷ The explicit parallel, among others elsewhere in the poem, illustrates the narratological focus of the war scene as *mise-en-abîme* on war scenes in the main narrative sequence of the poem. The echoes (explicitly verbal or otherwise) underscore the ecphrastic scene’s primacy in the reading of content and description elsewhere. The Shield is thus a microcosm of the poem – the reader can read the ecphrasis as a representation of events and of the poem’s description, and as a motivating factor in the construction of the poem’s themes and verbal discourse. The validity given to the parallelism by the reader, of the ecphrastic war scene with other (non-ecphrastic) war scenes, conditions the reader’s reading of other scenes on the Shield in terms of their true representation and motivation of the poem as a whole.⁷⁸

Intertextuality plays a vital role for this scene. The most relevant passages here are the Shield descriptions at *Il.* 18.535-538 and *Hes. Sc.* 156-159:⁷⁹ textual parallels include Ἔρις ἐν δὲ Κυδοιμός (...) ὀλοή Κήρ (*Il.* 18.535 – “there was Strife and Battle [...] and destructive Death”) ~ Ἔρις οὐλομένη (31),⁸⁰ κυδοιμοί (25), Κήρες (...) ἀμείλιχοι (34); and αἵματι φωτῶν (18.538 – “with the blood of men”) ~ αἵματι πολλῶ (27), αἶμα (37). There is sufficient intertextual evidence to suggest that the primary narrator is directing the reader’s memory to the Iliadic (and Hesiodic) ecphrastic passages, and that there is therefore scope for the reader to conclude that the Posthomeric primary narrator is merely describing and selecting details from the same (Iliadic Shield-) scene, but in a different way.⁸¹ The scene, in a way again typical of the poet’s use of other texts, does, however,

“We might almost be in the wonderland of the Phaeacians. It is all far from the hardship, injustice, and gloom one finds in the dour Hesiod’s pictures of human life.”

77 On these entities, see Campbell (1981) 151 n. 437-438, and James / Lee (2000) 12.

78 I should state here that the example on the Shield that I have chosen to discuss presents more *explicit* verbal correspondences than any other scene on the Shield; this, however, does not undermine the effect that this scene has on the reading of all other scenes, especially given that it immediately precedes the most allegorical scene on the Shield – the Mountain of *Arete* (5.49-56) –, it only serves to broaden expectation of further evidence of *mise-en-abîme*.

79 I refer to the Iliadic version for the sake of convenience, despite Edwards (1991) 221, who states that these lines in the *Iliad* are most likely an interpolation from the Hesiodic passage (*Sc.* 156-159); it is most probable that the interpolation would have been in the Iliadic text Quintus knew, and that, therefore, we should take the passage as ‘Iliadic’ for our purposes (both Homer and Hesiod are unavoidably present here). The text for Homer is from Monro / Allen (³1920).

80 Perhaps the adjective has been transferred from the intertextual Κήρ (*Il.* 18.535).

81 The scene broadly corresponds to the ‘City at War’ – *Il.* 18.509-540. The poet has the full spectrum of scenes actually constructed by Hephaestus originally – they were selected and described by the Iliadic interpreter for the Shield in *Iliad* 18, as fitted the thematic context, and likewise, the Posthomeric interpreter selected and described from the spectrum of scenes as appropriate for the thematic context of the Posthomeric Shield. This is suggested by lines 5.97-98 – discussed below.

also draw from Iliadic contexts other than the Shield, to formulate this distinctly Posthomeric description of the scene.⁸² ἐν δὲ Φόβος καὶ Δεῖμος (Q.S. 5.29) echoes Δεῖμός τ' ἡδὲ Φόβος (*Il.* 4.440);⁸³ *Il.* 11.36-37 – where the designs on Agamemnon's Shield are described – is significant for the mention of Γοργῶ βλοσυρῶπις (11.36 – “gory-faced Gorgon”), and Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε (37) within one short ecphrasis, which the scene in the *Posthomeric* echoes here at 5.38 and 5.29.⁸⁴

On the basis of one scene, and multiple textual correspondences, there is clear evidence of *mise-en-abîme* functioning in ecphrasis on the Posthomeric Shield of Achilles, other than the scene where the Mountain of *Arete* is described. Both here, and with the Mountain of *Arete*, the examples of *mise-en-abîme* suggest the actual nature of the thematic discourse within the overall narrative of the poem, and illustrate the nature of the poem's poetics. The ecphrastic scenes interact with similar epic situations in other texts through the reader's poetic memory;⁸⁵ they

82 The poet demonstrates similar practice to that noted by Hunter for Dionysius' *Periegesis* – Hunter (2003) 344.

83 *Il.* 5.738-742 (Athene's *aegis*), while not striking as an intertext, does mention φόβος and ἔρις (cf. Q.S. 5.29, 31) and a Gorgon's head (cf. Q.S. 5.38) – it is significant that these details occur within an ecphrasis, however. The Posthomeric Shield is feeding into multiple ecphrases.

84 There is one other Homeric passage relevant for this scene: both Vian (1966) and James / Lee (2000) miss the significance of *Od.* 11.612 for Ὑμῖναι (line 5.36) here – the intertext has even greater force for this passage –; the rest of *Od.* 11.612 finds an echo at 5.25. The poetic inheritance that the poet receives has affected the representation of scenes on the Shield of Achilles. For the Gorgons here on the Posthomeric Shield (5.38), see James / Lee (2000) 49, where it is stated that the Gorgon Medusa appears in ecphrasis twice in the poem, slain by Perseus on the quiver of Philoctetes at 10.195, and appearing on the *aegis* of Athena at 14.454-456. Further Iliadic parallels for this scene include πόλεμοι φθισήνορες (5.25 – “men-destroying wars”), which in the *Iliad* (so James / Lee [2000] 46) is used five times in the form πόλεμον φθισήνορα: 2.833, 9.600, 10.78, 11.331, and 14.43. The adjective is used three times elsewhere in the *Posthomeric*, each time of χάρμη (1.97, 5.231, and 11.19). There are also significant parallels for 5.27-28 (πέδον δ' ἅπαν αἶματι πολλῷ / δευομένῳ ἦικτο), both in the *Iliad* (4.451 = 8.65, 10.484, 11.394, 15.118, 15.715, 17.360, and 20.494) and in the *Posthomeric* itself (3.22, 6.354, 6.377, 11.161, 11.314, and 13.76). Vian (1966) 20 also compares numerous scenes from the pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum*. None of these references are as striking, in my opinion, as the Iliadic parallels, but the Hesiodic intertexts do show the influence Hesiod has outside the primary Hesiodic influence in the Mountain of *Arete* scene. He compares 5.34 with Hes. *Sc.* 248-257 for the mention of Κῆρες, but the textual correspondences do not extend beyond that; he also compares 5.29 with *Sc.* 195 for the mention of Δεῖμος and Φόβος. The most relevant comparison that Vian raises is between 5.31-33 – Ἔρις οὐλομένη (...) / ἥ μὲν ἐποτρύνουσα ποτὶ κλόνον ἄσχετον ἄνδρας / ἐλθέμεν – and *Sc.* 148 – δεινὴ Ἔρις πεπότητο κορύσσουσα κλόνον ἄνδρων (“terrible Strife fluttered gorging herself on the combat of men”).

85 The intertexts, of an intricate and manipulative nature throughout the *Posthomeric*, should always be interpreted within their context. For example, the Shield of Agamemnon (particularly *Il.* 11.36-37) is echoed here at 5.38, and 29, as mentioned above. The figure on Agamemnon's Shield, arguably a stable one (i.e. one not interpreted in a referential sense), is here activated into life on the Posthomeric Shield, where movement (38-40) outside of a mere inscribed figure on a medium is suggested. The poet is highlighting the intertextual *sedes* by contrasting his use

also interact with situations within the poem that echo them, where the referential ecphrastic scenes and narrative correspondences combine to allow the reader to read both sets as constructing meaning for each other.

Artefact and Ecphrasis: Reading the Shield of Achilles

So far in this paper, I have set out to prove that the reader can read at least two scenes on the Posthomeric Shield of Achilles as *mise-en-abîme*. More particularly, I have demonstrated that the scene that describes the Mountain of *Arete* is non-Homeric, contains Stoic influences, and emblematises an ideal that is a thematic thread running through the whole poem. I have not addressed the effect such a non-Homeric feature has on our reading of the intertextuality of the Shield of Achilles. Such originality worked into a poetic and mythological item that profoundly bespeaks indebtedness will have a strong impact on our reading of the intricate intertextual position of the *Posthomeric* in relation to Homer. In short, how can we as readers deal with the Mountain of *Arete*, which derives its identity from Stoicism, which is positioned as the key scene on the Shield of Achilles, a Shield which derives its intertextuality from the *Iliad*?

First, the intertextuality of the Shield of Achilles as a whole must be considered. The explicit intertextual juxtaposition of the Posthomeric and Iliadic Shields (which are, as an artefact, one and the same thing) suggests that the reader has a vital role in understanding the nature, inheritance, and function of the Posthomeric Shield, against the background of the Iliadic Shield, and the Homeric poems as a whole. This leads me to consider what I call the layers of viewing of the Posthomeric Shield, as activated by the reader. The Shield is striking for the complicated reading involved between the reader's poetic memory and the scenes depicted in the Posthomeric ecphrasis. No analysis of a Shield description in ancient Epic can be complete without taking into consideration the tension that exists between worked artefact and poetic description, and the hierarchy involved in viewing a Shield that, here especially, has been affected by previous description of it in an earlier work of literature.

I would describe layers of viewing involved in the Shield as follows: on the one hand, there is the Posthomeric primary narrator's viewing of the Iliadic Shield, as reflected in his adaptation and manipulation of the model. In this sense, the Posthomeric primary narrator behaves very much like a reader (he too has a poetic memory), and brings his reading of the Iliadic text to his narration. There is

of the figure within the ecphrasis here, and involving a more intricate ecphrastic interpretation on the part of the bard. For the nature of ecphrastic description in Late Antique poetry, and for its prevalence, see Roberts (1989) 55-57.

also the same primary narrator's viewing of the Posthomeric Shield, and subsequent description of it to the reader.

On the other hand, there exists the reader's knowledge of the Iliadic Shield – constituted by the description of that Shield by the Iliadic primary narrator – brought to the same reader's viewing of the Posthomeric Shield – a Shield described by the Posthomeric primary narrator. The reader's (poetic) memory of the Iliadic Shield enables the reader to identify, and to account for, the differences, both in the description, and in overall thematic function.

There are problems, however: how can such non-Homeric features such as the Stoic Mountain of *Arete* exist on a Shield that is the same artefact as that described by the Iliadic primary narrator, as made by Hephaestus? When first confronted by this intertextually innovative Shield, is the reader of the Shield viewing the Iliadic Shield focalized by the Posthomeric primary narrator, or reading an entirely new Shield affected by poetic memory of the Iliadic Shield? The poet himself provides the answer:

ἄλλα δὲ μυρία κείτο κατ' ἀσπίδα τεχνήντως
χερσὶν ὑπ' ἀθανάτης πυκινόφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο. (Q.S. 5.97-98)

There were countless other scenes skilfully depicted on that shield
by the immortal hands of shrewd-minded Hephaestus.

The inclusion of these lines near the end of the description of the Shield draws attention to the interpreter (in this case the Posthomeric primary narrator) and his reading (or, description and understanding) of the Shield that he is viewing.⁸⁶ The interpreter is suggesting he has the full spectrum of scenes on the Shield in front of him – he alone has access to this 'full' Shield of Achilles, and has been selecting and focalizing the scenes before him, appropriate to his epic, and readership. It therefore follows that the original interpreter (primary narrator) of the Iliadic

86 James / Lee (2000) 63 note that this statement "pointedly departs from the Homeric model", and that a similar statement is found concluding the account of the Shield of Eurypylus at 6.292-293. This second point that they make must be considered. It is noteworthy that *μυρία* is not used at 6.292; it is implied that there were some further (but not very many) scenes on the Shield of Eurypylus, but that the narrator had exhausted the key ones. The fact that there are *countless* other scenes on the Shield of Achilles implies that the referential world described (almost supernaturally) contrasts with any idea of a limited number of scenes on a worked artefact. Kakridis (1962) 56-57 argues that these comments at 5.97-98, aimed at something greater, are due to artistic weakness on the part of the poet. In the case of ephrastic description, he fails to see the function of these two lines.

Shield of Achilles also did not exhaust the number of the scenes on the Shield, but also selected and focalized.⁸⁷

The difference lies in selection and interpretation.⁸⁸ The reader is to assume that these scenes (including the Mountain of *Arete*) – while described in a way specific to the nature of description and narrative in the *Posthomeric* – were there on the original Shield of Achilles all along; it therefore follows, logically, that the poet of the *Posthomeric* is either, anachronistically, positing non-Homeric (in this case, Stoic) values onto the Homeric Shield of Achilles, or, that he is appropriating what he sees as Homeric values, giving them a place on the Shield of Achilles, and then is applying them to the *Posthomeric*. In essence, the extent to which the poet exerts his own ‘Homeric values’ in relation to his reading and re-evaluation of the Homeric texts (especially the *Iliad*) is focused here in the extent to which he decides to describe scenes on the Shield not described by the narrator of the *Iliad*. This does not mean that the Posthomeric Shield is a different Shield – it has been made by Hephaestus and is a poetical and ‘historic’ artefact.

This is vital for our understanding of the account of the Mountain of *Arete* (5.49-56). While undoubtedly containing an ideal that is Stoic, the reader is led to believe that this ‘Stoic ideal’ is in fact Homeric, since it was apparently on the original Shield all along, as constructed by Hephaestus. The poet is therefore appropriating for himself Homeric ‘authority’, that is, putting himself on equal terms with Homer, as equally having full knowledge of what is on the Shield.⁸⁹

The extent of the innovation on the Shield reflects the extent to which the poet is establishing a new (and essentially non-Homeric) Shield, and, emblematically (that is, in *mise-en-abîme*), a new and non-Homeric poem with determinedly non-Homeric (that is, Quintean) poetics. The fact that the poet obviously adheres (through intertextuality) to the Homeric model (with some considerable innovation) reflects, and underscores, the clearly Homeric-emulative (while innovative) style of the poem as a whole, encasing this running non-Homeric theme. Thus, an understanding of the relationship between the Posthomeric and Iliadic Shields

87 The Iliadic interpreter selected and described scenes appropriate for the literary and thematic content (and context) of the *Iliad*; the Posthomeric interpreter of the same Shield selected certain scenes appropriate for the *Posthomeric*, and described scenes described on the Iliadic account of the Shield in a way appropriate to the nature of the description (by the Posthomeric primary narrator) in the *Posthomeric*. That the Shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* is described with scenes relevant for its poetic and audience-context is suggested by Edwards (1991) 208-209, and by Taplin (2001) 346, 356. For a slightly contrasting stance, see Alden (2000) 50.

88 Cf. Hardie (1986) 346, of the Shield of Aeneas: “The scenes on the Shield of Aeneas [...] are to be understood as merely a selection from the multiplicity of images wrought by Vulcan on its surface, and summarized in the lines that introduce the ecphrasis (625-629).”

89 See the contribution of Bär in this volume, who stresses the identity of Quintus as a *Homerus novus*.

enables the reader to see the Mountain of *Arete* functioning as an intertextual *mise-en-abîme* for the construction of Posthomeric Homeric ethics.

I set out, in this paper, to argue that the Shield of Achilles, and especially the scene on that Shield where the allegorical Mountain of *Arete* is described, influences reading of the rest of the text, and is itself activated and expounded by the numerous correspondences with it in the poem. The essentially gnomic Mountain of *Arete* functions as *mise-en-abîme*, which the reader returns to whenever that reader discovers (particularly gnomic) parallels with it. The interrelated *gnomai* that I discussed illustrate the key place that secondary narrators such as Nestor and Achilles have as ‘authorial’ voices, reflecting, expanding, and expounding the allegory on the Shield. The two examples I highlighted involving these characters suggested the vital place Neoptolemus has in the poem, as the character singled out as most possessing the attributes and values presented on the allegorical figure on the Shield and in the commendatory *gnomai* addressed to him.

I also addressed, in this paper, the layers of reading involved in the Posthomeric Shield, made possible by the reader’s poetic memory of the Iliadic model. The poet, I argued, created scope within the intertextual system of the two Shields and the reader, to develop non-Homeric values without compromising the Homeric inheritance of the Posthomeric Shield and the ‘Homeric’ nature of the poem, as a result. The awareness for subtle innovation in ecphrasis – where there is a pause in the overall narrative of the poem – enabled the poet to establish his own Stoically-influenced values in a profoundly Homeric-emulative poem. The correspondences with the examples of *mise-en-abîme* on the Shield illustrated this successful interweaving of non-Homeric ethics within the overall Homeric nature of the poem.

I have attempted to illustrate that a literary-theoretical approach provides fruitful results from study of the *Posthomeric*, especially when coupled with the excellent philological basis the poem has so far been given. Endeavour up this ‘path’ can help to highlight the learned and allusive nature of the *Posthomeric*, proving wrong some unfavourable modern views of the poem.